DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 057 730 HE 002 702

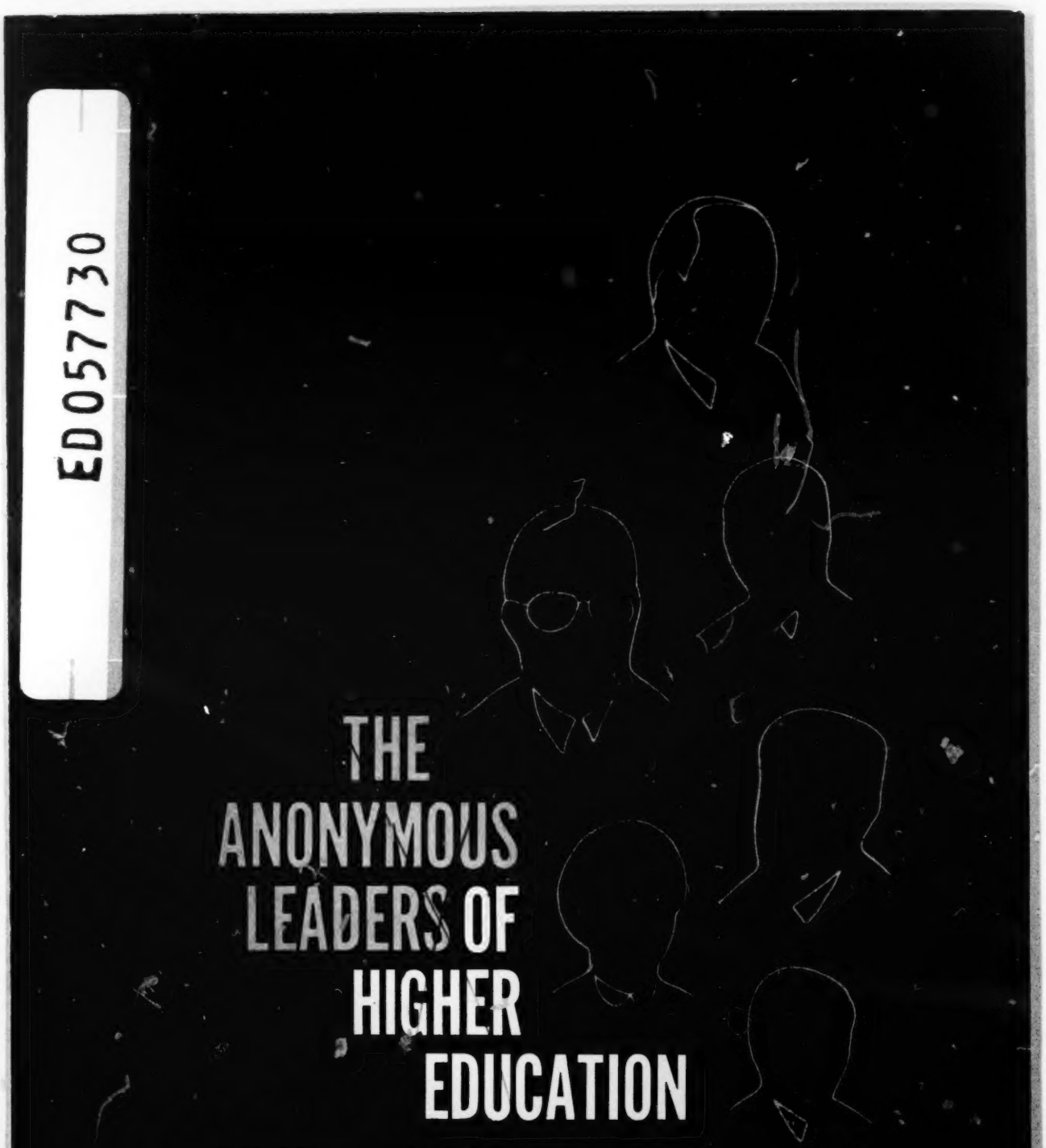
AUTHOR Glenny, Lyman A.
TITLE The Anonymous Leaders of Higher Education.
INSTITUTION California Univ., Berkeley. Center for Research and Development in Higher Education.
PUB DATE 71
NOTE 27p.
AVAILABLE FROM Center for Research & Development in Higher Education, 2150 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, Cal. 94704 ($1.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Policy; *Educational Administration; *Governance; *Higher Education; *Planning; Policy; *Policy Formation

ABSTRACT

The persons who control institutions of higher education are not necessarily the presidents and governing boards of those institutions as the public may believe. The real policymaking leaders are behind the scenes in almost complete anonymity. Some of these leaders may be involved with accrediting agencies which set guidelines for institutional accreditation; some are employed by the controlling state agencies; still others, such as those engaged in institutional research and analytical studies, and those who make and manage the budgets, are within the institutions themselves. (HS)

ED057730



THE ANONYMOUS LEADERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

LYMAN A. GLENNY

CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNA, BERKELEY 1971

1

ED057730

THE ANONYMOUS LEADERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

LYMAN A. GLENNY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

HE002702

CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
1971

2

CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

The Center for Research and Development in Higher Education is engaged in research designed to assist individuals and organizations responsible for American higher education to improve the quality, efficiency, and availability of education beyond the high school. In the pursuit of these objectives, the Center conducts studies which: 1) use the theories and methodologies of the behavioral sciences; 2) seek to discover and to disseminate new perspectives on educational issues and new solutions to educational problems; 3) seek to add substantially to the descriptive and analytical literature on colleges and universities; 4) contribute to the systematic knowledge of several of the behavioral sciences, notably psychology, sociology, economics, and political science; and 5) provide models of research and development activities for colleges and universities planning and pursuing their own programs in institutional research.

This paper was one of four major addresses given at the 1971 Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, the theme of which was *Institutional Research and Institutional Policy Formulation.*

The author, Lyman A. Glenny, is Associate Director of the Center for Research and Development in Higher Education at Berkeley.

The Anonymous Leaders of Higher Education is third in the Center's Occasional Papers series. The others were *The Redistribution of Power in Higher Education,* by T. R. McConnell, and *The White House Conference on Youth; 3 Task Force Papers,* by W. B. Martin, H. L. Hodgkinson, and K. P. Cross.

After a score of years during which a great deal of emphasis was put on "low profile" leadership for higher education—negotiators, intermediaries, moderators—the demand is turning toward a more assertive, aggressive style of leadership. But what is little understood is that the leaders who will actually control the direction of higher education in the future and who already do so to a large extent are not likely to be the visible or highly articulate presidents or the governing boards. Certain officers, who are virtually unknown both within and without the institution, often set directions and make more important policy for the long-range welfare of the institution than do the highly visible policy councils and chief administrators. A new leadership is emerging, but it is as anonymous in personality as it is awesome in power.

Outside of a few people in even the largest university, these bureaucrats are not only anonymous, they are conceived of as just cogs in a machine. They are faceless, without name, and without the legal responsibility for the well-being of the institutions. Nevertheless, as citizens and state political leaders fail to see their goals of accountability and control achieved through presidents and the boards of trustees, they turn to the coordinating boards, or to the governor's budget office or the legislative analyst, in order to obtain their objectives. As more and more of these outside agencies become involved in the policymaking processes of the university, its apparent leaders are caught in a bewildering crossfire of divergent purposes, and are finally left with little real power.

Current concern over the governance and policy control of higher education institutions grows out of the frustrations of many constituencies. Frustrated in getting their perceived needs met, students and faculty demand from presidents and boards a greater share of the policymaking power. Unhappy about costs and disruptions, the public and legislature demand that the boards of trustees and top administrators bring law and order to the campus. Accompanying their concern for peace at almost any price is the clear warning that presidents and boards had better be accountable for the quality, kind, and cost of educational programs being offered to undergraduate students. The assumption made in every case is that the top administrators, especially the president and the governing board, have at their disposal

the power, the authority, and the means to command policy and achieve the desired ends.

One can understand the frustration of the faculties with what has happened, for no matter how much decision control they obtain for their committees and senates, they never seem to obtain enough to control policy, so they fight the visible administration for more. Students sit in and demonstrate against the president's office, disrupt board meetings, and generally make themselves known to those who ostensibly have power to give, but they too remain frustrated. Both faculty and students believe that the president and the board have a surfeit of power. They claim that the leaders' power runs over into arbitrariness and tyranny—and they cry, "Share and become democratic. Let students and faculty sit on boards, policy councils, and the secret sessions where the real decisions are made."

But the most telling leadership for public higher education today is anonymous; both within the institution and outside it unknowns really control educational policy. Moreover, these unknown leaders are becoming equally powerful in the nonpublic institutions, which, like the public ones, will be subject to new external leadership as the states meet their demands for assistance by providing them with tax dollars for operation.

How many state coordinating board members or budget personnel can you name in your state? How many research analysts or business managers do the faculties and

students know? How much do any of the institutional people know about the controls and circumscriptions which the federal government exercises over policy?

ANONYMITY – OUTSIDE THE INSTITUTION

Professional

The number of these new leaders outside the institution is already large, and will continue to grow in the future, and their objectives will create a complex and often conflicting array of demands which the universities

A new leadership is emerging,
but it is as anonymous in personality
as it is awesome in power. . . .

and colleges must respond to. The first of these outsiders exercises control not only over the educational program within the institution, but also heavily influences its organization and administration. These are the invisible professionals of the accrediting agencies who do the reviewing and recommending. Initially, both concern over "diploma mills" and the need to facilitate the transfer of students among institutions were to be resolved by the establishment of these agencies. Lack of accreditation

meant only that the student pursuing the program would be heavily penalized in transferring to another institution; today it has far more drastic implications. Federal categorical grants for the various professions, student assistance grants and scholarships, and state and federal aid to institutions are with rare exceptions limited to institutions and to programs which are accredited. Today the organizations say they also promote high standards, protect society from incompetent practitioners, encourage self-evaluation and experimentation in the institutions, and protect them from undue political interference.

There are two principal types of accrediting agencies: those which accredit a whole institution, and those which accredit only a particular professional program. Membership in all these agencies is voluntary with the six regional associations formed and controlled by the institutions themselves. While these six have great influence, and are subject to the will of the conference of institutions they accredit, there are now over forty professional associations, consisting of practitioners in the field and the professors in the universities who train the practitioners, which also assert rights to accredit programs within the institution. Universities have little or no control over such associations, which, dominated in numbers by the professionals in the field, seem to act as a self-interest group for the professional school or department.

Universities are especially vulnerable to demands from the ever-increasing number of professional accrediting associations, and may at any one time be

subject to the standards of twenty or more of them each requiring the university to conform to higher and more elaborate standards of education, including minimums for student-faculty ratios, library resources, and physical space. Each association may also demand particular administrative arrangements, ranging from what title the head of the faculty group should be given, to determining whether the curriculum will be organized into a department or into a school independent of the regular governing machinery of the university. After a dozen or more of these associations establish their requirements, the latitude left to the administrators and the governing board is not very great. *Whose leadership prevails? Who makes the decisions?*

A few state systems of institutions have become so concerned over accrediting controls that they have seriously considered establishing a single state agency and freeing their institutions from all other accrediting bodies. Certain federal agency heads are recommending that a federal accrediting commission be established to achieve that same end.[1] Certainly better coordination among the associations is needed, but that will only be a partial solution. Whatever the accrediting agency, or however their number may increase or diminish, the college or university will continue to be subjected to standards set outside the institution by persons who may or may not be conversant with its goals, purposes, and mode of life.

[1] Information from staff of the Education Commission of the States in discussion with the author.

This faceless leadership seems destined to continue and will become more powerful before it becomes less.

Federal

Depending on its type and the degree of commitment to graduate education and research an institution of higher education has been variously affected by a second outside force, the federal presence, which for higher institutions has many faces, many moods, and many different and often conflicting objectives. The difference between federal anonymous leadership and that of certain state agencies discussed below is that the institution can avoid federal intervention if it chooses to refuse all federal grants or contracts. Submission to the controls and strong influences of the federal government is, theoretically, voluntary. In fact, however, the federal blandishments which have induced or seduced every level of government, much of industry and commerce, and all kinds of private agencies, have proved equally enticing to institutions of higher education.

Federal interests in higher education are highly specialized and have their own priorities. Recently a scholar wrote, " . . . individual government agencies utilized the expertise and facilities of higher education institutions in the pursuit of their own programs, with little attention to the overall effect of piecemeal federal support on the functioning of the educational institutions

involved, or of the national higher education system."[2] Many strains within the institutions have resulted. Imbalances have been created in educational programs by the concentration of federal funds on research and graduate training in the sciences. The system of project support through which funds are granted directly to university scientists has tended to draw the primary loyalty of faculty members from their institutions to the agencies providing research funds, and has reduced administrative control over budgeting and allocations of faculty time and institutional physical facilities.[3]

Each federal grant and contract carries with it controlling rules and conditions. Moreover, each also allows other federal laws to be applied to the recipient institution. These laws, initially enacted to apply to business and industry engaged in interstate commerce, are the anti-segregation and anti-discrimination provisions pertaining to race, sex, the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act, and related legislation on wages, hours, and working conditions. These legal constrictions apply to the operation of the whole institution, however small the grant received, and to private companies that construct campus buildings and provide major services.

[2]Bloland, H. G. *Higher education associations in a decentralized education system.* Berkeley: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, 1969.

[3]Shannon, J. A. Thoughts on the relationships between science and federal programs. *Educational Record,* Summer, 1967, *48*(3).

By agreeing to the fragmenting, mission-oriented federal programs, the institutions have found themselves with dozens of masters, all of whom are anonymous, or at least submerged, each with scattered responsibility and no overall federal philosophy or goal to bind them into a coordinated effort. Indeed many federal agencies and programs seem to be working at highly divergent or cross purposes. Beyond the immediate impacts of various programs, those institutions which have become the greatest partners with the federal government find substantial fluctuations in the level and kind of funding from one year to another, preventing sound program and personnel planning and resource allocation. Within the institution, the federal presence has further fractured an already badly-cracked set of educational and research goals.

State

Within the state, several state agencies may have substantial influence and consequence. State civil service systems may require all nonacademic employees to be under its control. The state building commission or department of public works may design, build, and accept for the state all academic, and, in some states, nonacademic buildings. Central purchasing agencies may determine the types and kinds of equipment which may be purchased.

Of all such agencies limiting the autonomy and policy powers of the leaders of public institutions, the

most powerful and the most debilitating are the new statewide coordinating boards and the state executive budget offices. The statewide governing board which 19 states now have for most or all of their public institutions should not be confused with the coordinating board, which is an agency normally appointed by the governor to be superimposed over the existing governing boards of the institutions, and which is awarded specific powers which are taken away from the governing boards or are new delegations of executive or legislative powers. Coordinating boards have been created primarily to control overlap and duplication of programs, to optimize the use of state funds, and to plan for the orderly development of the whole of higher education in the state. They clearly have major policymaking roles. Their control over the goals, functions, and programs of the individual institutions may be so considerable that they at times dictate to the institutions, yet few citizens and not many legislators know the functions of the board, or the names of the members and the executive director.

Under some of the 29 established coordinating boards, the powers to plan and to approve programs extend to final determination of the major roles and functions which each college or university may perform. Such a board can limit some institutions to undergraduate work, reward others with the master's degree and still others with both advanced degree and research programs. It may change these objectives from cycle to cycle in its planning. No new degree program or major, no department, school, extension center, or campus may be started without its approval.

Beyond these powers, fundamental to the educational role of the institutions, coordinating boards also possess those of budget review which seek to reduce inefficiencies and to optimize state resources. While this

No coherent overall policy in relation to higher education guides the various state agencies, the myriad of federal ones, or the professional societies.

role is only an advisory one to the governor and legislature, its exercise may have as much effect upon the institutions as if the legislature itself had spoken. Indeed, new educational programs, new teaching-learning technologies and other innovations are almost entirely at the mercy of the coordinators. The level of funding of every new change is set by board consent, and it is also the board's budget formulas which often determine the institutional appropriation. The view of the coordinators may differ markedly from those of the leaders of the institutions, yet they will prevail more often than not, even if challenged in legislative halls.

The second of these powerful state offices, the executive budget agency, has, of course, existed for some time, but whereas earlier budget reviews singled out particular objects of expenditure for criticism (pieces of

equipment, stationery, travel, etc.), the current adoption of state management information systems and program budgeting (PPBS) encourages budget analysts to deal fully and directly with educational and research programs. When analyzed and applied to these programs the critical data on operations and costs which information systems furnish allow budget officers to determine whether a program is "productive" (i.e., good) or not. Unlike yesteryear, these reviewers too are professional people of quality and sophistication. They as well as the state coordinators may make critical judgements about programs, or changes in the function and role of institutions and in the amount of funds which may be awarded to each and every activity. Executive budget reviews are already so thorough in a few states as to preclude more than a broad advisory role for governing boards or even coordinating agencies. As legislators try to regain power from the governors, legislative budget review agencies composed of fiscal analysts are increasingly found to duplicate in part or entirely the reviews already made by the executive budget personnel, and, in some cases, the reviews of the coordinating boards.

The newest of the state agencies which could affect higher education, but has not yet made its presence felt, is the state planning office. Closely tied in with the governor's office, these agencies now exist in 26 states and are formed to provide research and analyses, and to encourage improved planning and coordination of the total program of state government. Taking a larger and larger share of state appropriations, higher education will hardly

escape intrusion by this office as it becomes accustomed to the use of statewide comprehensive information systems and to complementing the operations of the state budget office. *Who is your state planning officer?*

Last for consideration under this enumeration of state agencies controlling some aspect of higher education policy is the state scholarship and/or loan commission. Today, about 20 states have such agencies and additional ones are created each year. This commission may have control over the distribution of many million dollars of state and, at times, federal funds and its rule-making powers allow it wide latitude for administration of these monies in such ways as to aid the private or the public institutions, or one type of institution rather than another (e.g., the university vs. the community college). Or it may be able to administer the funds by dealing directly with the students rather than through the institutions. As the sums of money gain magnitude, these agencies can substantially influence the rate of college admissions and the flow of students into the various types of institutions.

Earlier, I suggested that the nonpublic institutions will be as subject to internal anonymous leadership as are the public, and that if they accept state aid—directly or indirectly—they become subject to the external controls as well. Already they accede to federal influences equally with the public institutions, and as they become successful, as in New York, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere, in obtaining direct state grants, they will

become for state purposes just another recipient of state tax dollars and will be subject to the same management and planning controls as in the public sector. To believe that funds will be given without control is to ignore the history of all governmental grants-in-aid. The hope of the nonpublic sector that their tax funds will not receive the same searching examination as those of the public institutions is an illusion. Indeed, they become public as they accept funds, whether in large or small amounts. Having already succumbed to the federal influence and to accrediting standards, it is only a matter of time before private colleges and universities also, if they persist and succeed in obtaining state appropriations, are controlled by the anonymous leaders of the state bureaucracy.

Each of the many state agencies has its own legislative enabling act giving it powers and duties. Each exercises its authority with little reference to the others. Some work at divergent or conflicting purposes with others just as agencies do at the federal level. No coherent overall policy in relation to higher education guides the various state agencies, the myriad of federal ones, or the professional societies. Higher education institutions are subjected to the will of each of them individually. Some of these agencies have final decisionmaking powers over the very heart of the educational program others touch the university or college in less fundamental ways, but cumulatively all these agencies have powers which, collectively exercised, leave little policy discretion in the institution itself. In terms of day-to-day administration, the leaders of the institution, in responding to the many

demands of these outside agencies, may have little or no time to engage in long-range planning, or to provide the kind of internal leadership which the citizens, donors, and political leaders expect and demand. Presidents and their governing boards are legally charged with the task of providing high quality education to the students. But the accrediting societies and the state and federal governments have usurped their power and authority, placing it in the hands of a host of faceless civil servants and professionals who have no direct responsibility for the institution's welfare.

ANONYMITY – WITHIN THE INSTITUTION

Outside the institution, the faceless ones are likely to be strengthened and to become a greater force for control of educational policy than they are today. Within the institution we may be able to solve the problems arising from anonymous leadership.

Internally, the persons most responsible for the invisible leadership in both public and private higher institutions are those engaged in institutional research and analytical studies, and those who make and manage the budgets. The public rarely, if ever, hears of these people, and the faculty and students are only vaguely aware of their existence.

Although bureaus of research and analysis are new to the internal structure of colleges, the business

office is not. Under a variety of different titles depending on the size and type of institution, the business manager has always exercised far more influence on the budget requests and the internal fund allocations than commonly

Outside the institution, the faceless ones are likely to . . . become a greater force for control of educational policy. . . .

supposed. Even when faculties, and now students, determine that a new program or a major change in curriculum is necessary, it is the money manager who assesses the financial means for its funding.

To effect new ideas normally requires new money or a reallocation of existing funds. The alternatives which the formal policymakers will have before them will be those which the business manager suggests after juggling (sometimes by such sophisticated means as simulation models and computers) many variables, which may include: sources of income and the conditions under which such funds may be expended, commitments to outside contractors as well as deans and department heads, the rules and attitudes of the funding sources (budget agencies, donors, foundations) toward the particular changes proposed, and all of the rules and regulations which have

been established by outside agencies and inside councils and senates. Because his office is the sole interpreter of most, if not all, of the constricting documents establishing operating parameters, whatever the money manager decides can and cannot be done is quite likely to prevail with the president and internal committees, to say nothing of the board.

Usually only persons who have worked closely with the policymakers in the business and budget offices know the extent of the power they have assumed and the deference paid them by the president and board. For instance, although its Committee T for internal governance has been working for many years, the AAUP appears to have just discovered that the business office has a policy role, and it now wants faculty to have more contact and influence on budgets and internal fund allocations. The Association believes business and money managers must have the real power because they have not located significant amounts of it in other councils or offices of institutional governance. When and if they get involved in financial affairs, they will finally know what real power is exercised by fund control. But up to this moment the people holding the lid on the money pot have been anonymous to most of us.

A bureau of research and analytical studies has a similar impact since it also controls information and interprets data and documents which lie outside the expertness of most other persons in the institution. Until

now, its researchers have usually had a free hand to collect the kinds and types of data which they think are useful and to engage in research which they believe important. Their findings are interpreted according to their biases and assumptions and are released intact or in fragments as they see fit, to as large or as narrow an audience as they deem appropriate. What is researched and how it is analyzed in terms of what objectives usually are the decisions of the researchers, not of the alleged policymaking bodies of the university. The directed research occasioned by the vice president who asks for a particular study to be done because of some current crisis infringes on the free research which characterizes bureau activity and, even for these studies, unless the requesting party takes a working part in its design and analyses the researchers may continue to assert their freedome to collect and analyze data and information which they deem important. They may also write up the directed research and suggest the alternative courses of policy action which they consider logical or desirable from their frame of reference.

To neither the money managers nor to the institutional researchers do I impute bad or malicious motives. Indeed they provide to the policymaking structure a major source of expert and often pertinent information which would not otherwise be available. They do as fine a job as their talents and professional competence allow. I am instead attempting to reveal the limitations within which the visible and legally responsible

policymakers act. Many decisions are made for them by these staff members. Decisions of long-range importance are often circumscribed by the kinds of information furnished as well as the form in which it is presented. The researcher's argumentation, his alternatives, his underlying assumptions, and his selected presentation of data, may be far more determinative of final policy than all the hours that faculty members, students, and administrators spend in policy council deliberations.

The business manager and the institutional researcher need to be closely associated with the decisionmakers. They also must be told rather than allowed to generate for themselves the goals of the institution, the operating objectives, and the broad assumptions and values basic to its achievement. These staff personnel should also be governed more closely in the establishment of information systems, and should receive far more input from policymakers in the interpretation and analysis of data and information. Only then will those with authority give as much direction to the institution as do business and research staff members.

Two other internal offices that may have extraordinary influence on policy without being fully directed toward the long-range planning goals of the institution are the admissions officer, who finally determines which students, with which capabilities and from which socioeconomic backgrounds enter the college or university, and the student financial aids officer, who

has had increasingly greater sums to distribute to prospective and enrolled students. Among other factors, how the latter perceives financial need, college objectives, scholarship records, ethnic minorities, and the straight vs. the youth culture has significant bearing on the kinds of students the faculty will find in their classrooms.

Again we find professional people doing the job for which they were trained. But again, we need to be aware of the impact of decisions by anonymous officers

At this moment in our history, we may be able to compensate for or correct some of the internal problems of leadership. . . .

who are subjected to little real supervision, but whose actions have significant implications for the ability of the college or university to carry out its educational tasks. Both faculty and administrative policymakers should be fully involved in establishing the final decision guidelines for use by these officials.

Earl C. Bolton and Fredric Genck presented the view that universities and colleges need larger and more

competent high level administrative staffs for academic affairs and for planning.[4] I agree that the lacking elements in most institutions which, if present, would bring unity and coordination to the present disparate efforts of students, faculty, and administration are: a long- and intermediate-range plan for the institution setting forth its goals and assumptions, operational objectives, and guidelines for achievement; one or more high administrative officers charged solely with the task of planning and coordinating the implementation of the plans; and an advisory-working task force with the continuing responsibility for keeping the plans and their implementation under constant supervision.

IN SUMMARY . . .

. . . the ostensible leaders of higher education, the presidents and the governing boards, are the real leaders of institutions mainly in title and in visibility. Internally, technical staffs limit the decision control and breadth of vision of apparent leaders, paring down alternatives without ever having their own assumptions, operating objectives, or technical analyses subjected to critical leadership review or direction. Externally, virtually every decision made within the institution, especially about educational program and management, is subject to review and final decision by a faceless and unknown

[4]Bolton, E. C., & Genck, F. Universities and management. *The Journal of Higher Education,* April 1971, *42*(4).

contingent of servants belonging to a variety of private and governmental agencies.

At this moment in our history, we may be able to compensate for or correct some of the internal problems of leadership. On the other hand, the external leaders, about whom we know so little, are very likely to assume even greater control over higher education institutions. The number of professional accrediting associations continues to increase. State planning is becoming more centralized and more comprehensive. The federal government may appropriate greater amounts of money for more purposes, including instruction, but it will also persist in pursuing through categorical means its several national objectives. Also it is quite likely to demand increasing amounts of management information on some common bases, so that its influence is equitable from one institution to another. Federal planning capabilities are likely to improve, especially if the National Institute for Education and the Foundation for Higher Education are established.

All these factors lead to the conclusion that the real leadership roles of the president and the board are very badly eroded. We need to recognize this fact and we had better apprise politicians and the public of the agencies and the people to be held accountable for major decisions on higher education. Until this is done, all the constituents of the university will continue to be frustrated because their expectations for leadership in policy formulation are directed at persons who are no longer in positions to exercise it.